

NORTH CAROLINA PRAMS FACT SHEET

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North Carolina Latina Maternal Health

2004–2007 N.C. Pregnancy Risk Assessment Monitoring System (PRAMS)

North Carolina has a sizable Latino population. Since 1990, the size of the Latino population has more than quadrupled in the state. According to 2007 estimates, North Carolina's resident Latino population was 637,379; representing approximately 7 percent of the state's population. Over half (52%) of the Latino population falls in the childbearing ages of 15 to 44, compared with only 41 percent of the non-Latino residents of the state.¹ Births to Latina mothers have also risen substantially during this time period. In 1990, Latinos accounted for less than 2 percent (1.68%) of all resident births. By 2007, Latinos comprised approximately 17 percent of all North Carolina resident births. The overall birth rate per 1,000 for Latina mothers ages 15–44 in North Carolina in 2007 was 167.5, compared with a rate of 62.2 for non-Latina women.² Despite the dramatic rise in births, the reproductive health of Latinas is largely understudied in North Carolina. In this report, we examine North Carolina Pregnancy Risk Assessment Monitoring System (PRAMS) data from 2004–2007 to better understand the maternal health of Latina mothers in the state.

Barriers

Barriers may keep women from accessing prenatal care as early and as often as they would like in pregnancy. Overall, 38 percent of mothers reported at least one barrier to obtaining prenatal care. Latina mothers were significantly more likely to report at least one barrier compared with other race/ethnicity groups (63% vs. 33%), Latina mothers were also more likely to report two or more barriers compared to other race/ethnicity groups (48% vs. 26%). A variety of barriers to prenatal care were reported by Latina mothers. Approximately one-third of Latina women reported not having enough money or insurance to pay for prenatal care visits, lack of transportation, or that they were unable to get an appointment when they wanted one. About 20 percent of Latina women reported that they did not receive prenatal care because they did not have a Medicaid card, their doctor/health plan would not start care as early as they wished, they wanted to keep their pregnancy a secret, they couldn't take time off of work, or they had no one to take care of their other children.

Prenatal Care

Timing

Access to early prenatal care is important for good birth outcomes.³ According to 2004–2007 North Carolina PRAMS data (see Figure 1), Latina mothers of all ages were less likely than other race/ethnicity groups to receive prenatal care during the first trimester of their pregnancy. In general, only 54 percent of Latina mothers began prenatal care in the first trimester compared to 85 percent of non-Latina white mothers, 64 percent of non-Latina African-American mothers, and 67 percent other non-Latina mothers.

Latina mothers (22%) were also more likely to report that they did not receive prenatal care as early as they would have liked compared to non-Latina white mothers (15%).

